

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 CU-02 /054 W
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FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2214
USIA WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CSCE, CZ
SUBJECT: 14TH INTERNATIONAL TELEVISION FESTIVAL

USIA FOR IEU AND IMV

1. THE EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED A LETTER FROM THE 14TH INTERNATIONAL TELEVISION FESTIVAL TO BE HELD IN PRAGUE FROM JUNE 15-23, 1977, ASKING FOR OFFICIAL AMERICAN PARTICIPATION. THE FESTIVAL SPONSORS, IN ADDITION TO WRITING THE AMBASSADOR, ALSO SENT INVITATIONS TO THE MAJOR AMERICAN TV NETWORKS.

2. THE FESTIVAL REQUESTS "TELEVISION DRAMATIC WORKS - ORIGINAL TELEVISION PRODUCTIONS AND FILMS, LITERARY AND DRAMATIC WORKS ARRANGED FOR TELEVISION WHICH DEAL WITH THE PROBLEMS OF CONTEMPORARY MAN, CONTRIBUTE TO THE STRENGTHENING OF POSITIVE HUMAN VALUES AND WHICH STRIVE FOR SOCIAL PROGRESS." THE SECOND CATEGORY IS "TELEVISION

MUSICAL WORKS AND PROGRAMS WITH MUSICAL THEMES-TELEVISION PROGRAMS INTERPRETING MUSICAL WORKS IN THE FIELD OF MUSICAL DRAMATIC ART, SYMPHONIC AND CHAMBER MUSIC, AND PROGRAMS WITH MUSICAL THEMES, INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS, MUSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS, ETC."

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3. THERE HAS BEEN NO OFFICIAL U.S. PARTICIPATION IN THIS CZECHOSLOVAK TELEVISION SPONSORED FESTIVAL IN RECENT YEARS. THE PRIZES, AS EXPECTED, GENERALLY GO TOWARD EASTERN BLOC PARTICIPANTS, AND LIKE ALL SUCH EASTERN EUROPEAN EVENTS, THE FESTIVAL REPRESENTS A PROPAGANDA SPRING-BOARD FOR "SOCIALIST" CAUSES.

4. NEVERTHELESS, THE DEPARTMENT AND AGENCY MAY WANT TO TAKE A FRESH LOOK AT WHETHER OR NOT TO ENCOURAGE OFFICIAL OR NON-OFFICIAL AMERICAN PARTICIPATION IN THIS YEAR'S FESTIVAL. ON THE POSITIVE SIDE, ONE OF THE PROVISIONS OF BASKET III OF THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT IS A GREATER EAST-WEST COOPERATION "THROUGH THE EXCHANGE OF BOTH LIVE AND RECORDED RADIO AND TELEVISION PROGRAMMES." IN THIS CONTEXT, THE PRAGUE FESTIVAL IS NO MORE AND NO LESS A PROPAGANDA EVENT THAN ANY OTHER SUCH FESTIVAL, AND SINCE THE ENTRIES WILL BE SHOWN ON CZECHOSLOVAK TELEVISION, WOULD REPRESENT ONE OF THE RARE INSTANCES WE WOULD HAVE TO SHOW SOME POSITIVE FILMS ABOUT AMERICAN LIFE TO LOCAL TV AUDIENCES. IT COULD ALSO BE INTERPRETED AS A FURTHER U.S. GESTURE TOWARD FULFILLMENT OF THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT, AND IT WOULD COST US LITTLE.

6. ON THE OTHER HAND, CZECHOSLOVAK TELEVISION IS EXTRAORDINARILY STRIDENTLY ORIENTED IDEOLOGICALLY. ITS NEWS AND FEATURE PRESENTATIONS ARE PERVASIVELY ANTI-AMERICAN, WITH NO INDICATION OF ANY CHANGE, AT LEAST UNTIL THE CLAIMS/GOLD QUESTION IS SETTLED, AND DOUBTFULLY THEN.

7. SOME MEMBERS OF THE EMBASSY SEE A SLIGHT ADVANTAGE TO PARTICIPATING IN THE FESTIVAL, ESPECIALLY WITH AN EYE ON BELGRADE 77. LOCAL MEDIA COVERAGE IS SO NEGATIVE, IT COULD HARDLY GET MUCH WORSE, AND THERE IS THE MODEST BENEFIT OF SHOWING SOME SELECTED AMERICAN WORKS TO A LARGE TV AUDIENCE.

8. MAJORITY OF THE EMBASSY STAFF IS AGAINST PARTICIPATING IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FESTIVAL AT PRESENT AND UNTIL CZECHOSLOVAK TV SHOWS SOME INTEREST IN IMPROVING ITS TREATMENT OF U.S.

9. PAO'S VIEW IS THAT RESPONSE ALONG FOLLOWING LINES MIGHT BE IN ORDER: "THANK YOU FOR THE INFORMATION ON THE 14TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL TV FESTIVAL WITH ITS MOTTO 'THE TV SCREEN SERVES MUTUAL KNOWLEDGE AND BETTER UNDERSTANDING AMONG NATIONS,' AND THE COMMENDABLY STATED PURPOSE OF SHOWING FILMS THAT 'CONTRIBUTE TO THE STRENGTHENING OF POSITIVE HUMAN VALUES AND WHICH STRIVE FOR SOCIAL PROGRESS.' AS WE LISTEN TO THE DAILY NEWS COVERAGE OF YOUR STATION WHEN IT DISCUSSES AMERICAN LIFE AND POLICY, AND AS WE VIEW THE DOCUMENTARY AND FEATURE FOOTAGE YOU SELECT, WHICH CONSTANTLY SUGGESTS THE OPPOSITE OF A CLIMATE OF 'MUTUAL KNOWLEDGE AND BETTER UNDERSTANDING,' I AM SURE YOU WILL UNDERSTAND THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY OF OUR PARTICIPATING IN YOUR FESTIVAL AT THIS TIME.

10. "IF, HOWEVER, THE LEADERSHIP OF CZECHOSLOVAK TELEVISION HAS ANY SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF TELEVISION, EITHER IN THE CONTEXT OF

THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT, OR THE PROPOSED CULTURAL EXCHANGES AGREEMENT
BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES, OR SIMPLY ON THE BASIS OF PROFESSIONAL
MEDIA COVERAGE, WE WILL BE READY TO MEET WITH YOU TO DISCUSS BOTH
THE POSSIBILITIES OF CREATING BETTER UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN OUR
TWO COUNTRIES AND THE QUESTION OF FESTIVAL PARTICIPATION."

11. PLEASE ADVISE.
BYRNE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 07-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
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Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Format: TEL
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Handling Restrictions: n/a
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